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Mrs Bridges
The Headteacher
King Edward Primary School
St Andrew Street
Littleworth
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Dear Mrs Bridges

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a Notice to Improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 21 May 2008, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the pupils, staff, governors and the representative of the local authority for the time they gave.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

As a result of the inspection on 31 October – 1 November 2007, the school was asked to: ensure that there is consistent good practice in teaching, particularly in planning for pupils of different abilities, target setting and marking, so that standards rise in English, maths and science; increase opportunities for writing in all subjects; extend the role of the governors and staff with whole-school responsibilities so that they contribute more effectively to monitoring and evaluation.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Currently, the deputy headteacher is absent from school through illness and one teacher is on paternity leave. Both classes are covered by supply teachers. The deputy head's role as literacy coordinator has been temporarily allocated to one of the teaching staff.

The headteacher has maintained her determination to improve the school's provision and raise standards and achievement. Her thoughtful and perceptive leadership is a major factor in the improvements made. The school's tracking of pupils' current progress and the results of the February assessments show that pupils' achievement is increasing and standards are rising, especially in Key Stage 2. However, in both Key Stages, some of the more able pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Because of the emphasis that the school has placed on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, standards in science are not rising as quickly. There is insufficient science work undertaken and not enough attention given to developing pupils' investigative skills.

All teachers plan lessons for pupils with differing abilities and work is becoming more closely matched to pupils' needs, especially at Key Stage 2. However, although the level of challenge has improved, it is still not consistent. Some pupils, especially the more able, are not provided with work which stretches their capabilities and allows them to make the progress they could.

All pupils are set targets in literacy and numeracy, and the majority of pupils know what they must do to improve. In all classes targets are displayed on the walls and pupils have their own target sheets attached inside their books. In those classes where targets are used well, aspects of the lesson are focused on the targets and pupils are provided with many opportunities to learn and succeed.

In most classes, marking is used to provide pupils with good advice on how to improve. There are some very good examples of marking, especially in writing in Key Stage 2. In a few classes, pupils make good use of the lesson success criteria to assess their own work. However, although satisfactory progress has been made, not all classes are fully implementing the marking policy.

Pupils are now given more opportunities to develop their writing in lessons other than literacy. For example, work on 'save the rain forest' gave pupils the opportunity to practise their skills in persuasive writing and balanced arguments. In some classes there is too much reliance on pre-printed worksheets which give pupils little opportunity to develop their writing skills.

Senior leaders and subject leaders are now operating a planned cycle of monitoring to evaluate the work of the school. Although their leadership skills have improved and they understand their role in improving standards and achievement, they have yet to develop their skills of providing challenge as well as support to the staff. Consequently, they are not holding the teachers to account well enough for the progress made by the pupils in their care. Governors have received local authority training and are now considerably more knowledgeable about their role in holding the school to account. They now involve themselves in data analysis, shared observations, and discussions with pupils and parents.

The local authority has provided useful guidance mainly through the team of consultants and links with a local successful infant school.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector